

Chapter 25: Spells.

Everyone is sitting on Forest's sofas: Justin next to Ada, Ada next to Courtney, Courtney to Sylock, Sylock to Ramon, and Ramon to Mesmeren. The elder walks towards them with a purple book in hand, sitting down on a chair beside them. Mokuri sits on the ground next to him, Forest flipping through a couple of pages. He stops, taking one long gaze at the book, lowering his brows. He then eyes the group.

"Do you two have a clue on what Spells are? Any guesses as to what they could be?"

Justin and Ada look at each other for a moment before staring back. "I suppose it relates to Magic type, right?" Ada replies.

"I'm...with Ada on this," Justin follows.

Forest continues his gaze, nodding. "You're on the right track." He glances down at the book. "*Spells.*" Pauses. "*They are books created by Sorcerous to enhance society, further bringing peace to the world of Pokémon. There's eight types of Spells: Transmutation, Immunity, Teleportation, Time, Illusion, Nature, Emotion, and Revival. These were filled with might and unworldliness only expert Sorcerous could use. However, the Wizlore government are the only ones that could utilize the Time, Nature, and Revival Spells.*"

"What do these Spells do?" Ada asks, her hand to her chin. "And how come the Wizlore government are the only ones to use the Time, Nature, and Revival Spells?"

The cane wielding elder looks at her. "These Spells do all kinds of unique, mystical abilities. In fact, there should be a page somewhere that describes them in great detail. Let's see..." Forest flips a couple of pages before stopping. "Ah, here it is. Now then, *the first Spell, Transmutation, allows the user to...form...ot...in...*"

Everyone blinks at the elder. "What???" they all say, Mokuri responding in his Pokémon language.

"..." The elder blinks. "Oh right!" He shakes his head, chuckling. "I forgot that I spilled coffee on the Spells Information page last time I read it." He shows everyone the page, stains coating the words as if they are melting. "And now I'm finding it difficult to read."

Ada rests her hand on her head, shaking it. "Well that's just great." She folds her arms. "Do you know what these Spells do by memory then?"

"Nope." Forest smiles. Ada grunts with annoyance, sighing. "Although, I think I know some stuff about Transmutation. It has something to do with letting the user transform themselves and others into anything. Or something related to that."

“Huh...Do you know how someone can use it? As in activating it by any means or...?”

Forest shrugs. “I have no clue.” Taps his head. “I only know what it does rather than how you can use it.” He flips to the page he was at. “As for the government question: Those three Spells are by far the deadliest of the eight Spells. Because of what those Spells can do to anyone, having them fall into the wrong hands will cause nothing but madness....”

“Hmm...” Ada crosses her legs, her finger resting on her chin, her brow raising.

The Lopunny stretches her arms. “By the way, do you have to read the book word for word?” Courtney asks, her head resting on her hands, elbows on knees. “Couldn’t you summarize them in your own words?”

Forest scratches his head. “If I were to do that, I’d have a hard time explaining it.”

“But you didn’t have a hard time explaining the Transmutation Spell.”

“True, but there’s bits about it that I might be leaving out...Especially since the Spells Info page is ruined, thanks to me.” The elder chuckles, rubbing the back of his book. Sounds of shuffles rise from it, rough and coarse. “I really should get a new copy of The Birth of Wizlore, come to think of it.”

“Right.” The Lopunny sighs, tapping her chin.

Forest stares back at his book. *“Spells were used for many years until humans began abusing them for their own purposes, including those working for the government.”*

A page is flipped. *“Many riots and violence ran rampant across the globe: People transforming others into Pokémon or unknown creatures, people disappearing out of thin air, people reviving others from the dead and manipulating the natural habitat itself—This was the corruption from using eight different Spells, which led to the revival of Dne.”*

Ramon gazes down, lowering his brows. *So...humans did all of this? Not only through Magic type, but also through Spells,* the Zorua thinks, uncertainty traveling throughout. He trembles. *I...I think what my brother and Arthur said about humans...might be ri—*

“H-Hey Ramon,” Mesmeren says, the Zorua trembling. She holds her hands together. “Are you okay? You’re...shaking.”

Ramon comes to a halt, turning his head towards the others: Their attention is on him. The Zorua sighs, nodding. “I’m fine. Don’t worry.” He nudges the sofa’s edge.

“You sure?” Justin asks, staring with concern. Ramon gives a small smile, everyone looking at each other with uneasiness.

Forest and Mokuri gaze at the Zorua for a moment, raising their eyebrows before the elder flips another page. *"Pauline Phoenix and Vincent Silver utilized these Spells to defeat Dne during the final battle. After the war ended, the Wizlore government destroyed many of the existing Spells so Dne wouldn't return."* Forest closes the book.

Ada's finger rests on her cheek, tilting her head. "I don't get it."

Everyone looks at her.

"Oh? What is it that you don't get?" Forest asks.

"Well forest starters, she said she doesn't get this thing called 'It'," Justin replies, snapping his fingers before displaying his finger guns, snickering.

Courtney is the first to burst out laughing while Ada, Sylock, and Mokuri glare at the boy. Ramon and Mesmeren stare into utter confusion, Forest chuckling along the way.

"I like you, kid."

Ada folds her arms. "My goodness, Justin: We're talking about your ancestor and Spells here. Be serious, for once!" She scuffs.

The Lopunny covers her lips, smirking. "Nothin' wrong with trynna brighten the mood, eh? And besides: That Forest joke was bound to happen eventually."

Sylock gradually looks at her. *Were you planning to tell the joke yourself?* the Blaziken thinks.

The girl clears her throat. "Anyways, I'm referring to the government's decision to get rid of the Spells. How did they destroy many of them when you have one, Forest? ...Or rather, *had* one."

The elder caresses his beard. "...That's simply because I was tasked to guard the last Transmutation Spell by the Wizlore government." His brows lower, gripping his cane.

Courtney gasps. "You have? ...So that means you're—"

"A Spell Guardian," Forest finishes. "I was given this role after saving Serenity from criminals raiding it a long while back."

Sylock moves his hands. *"Was that why those humans in suits wanted to talk to you privately?"* Forest simply nods, Sylock staring off to the side with widened eyes.

Ada leans forward. "What's a Spell Guardian?"

"A Spell Guardian is someone who's tasked by the Wizlore government to protect the last Spell of its kind. It can be a group of Spell Guardians protecting it, or one person like myself." Forest stares at his book. "It doesn't matter what social label we're given, Ordina, Sorcerous, or Intellicate: *We must* protect those Spells at all costs."

"Interesting..." The girl frowns, tapping her arm. "But then here's what I don't get: Why would the government keep those last remaining Spells *even* after people abused them so much?"

"Ada...has a point," Ramon says, standing on fours. "Shouldn't they get rid of them entirely? That way, evil beings such as humans wouldn't abuse them further."

Everyone immediately jolts towards the Zorua.

"Evil beings such as *who* now?" Justin and Ada say.

"I—" the Zorua pauses, sitting back down and curling himself with his bushy tail. "S-Sorry. I...have no clue why I said that."

Mesmeren's hands shake, her fingers nudging each other, the nerves spiraling. Her lips quiver.

Forest raises his brow. "I...see then." He sighs. "As for why the Wizlore government doesn't get rid of the Spells entirely: That much, I have no clue."

Justin presses his hand against his chin. "Don't the book know about that? Maybe?"

Forest shakes his head. "Even the authors of The Birth of Wizlore don't know." He opens the book and turns a page, showing it to everyone. They all lean forward.

"While many Spells of their type were destroyed, the last remaining ones are left untouched: Protected by Spell Guardians, under oaths of the Wizlore government. Why the government chose to keep them alive is a mystery..."

Forest looks at the ceiling. "Think it said something like that."

Courtney blinks in surprise before pointing at the page. "Yeah, you got that all memorized word for word, Sir," she says. "Somehow."

The elder turns the book around, smirking. "Haha! Looks like my memorization skill is still alive and kicking! ...Somewhat!"

"Aboma!" Mokuri shouts, smiling and raising his arms in enthusiasm.

Forest shuts the book, closing his eyes. "So...anyways." He looks ahead. "Any other questions on your mind, you two?"

The teens look at each other for a moment before gazing at the ceiling, raising their brows and tapping their chins. They both shrug.

“Got none, as far as I’m concerned,” Ada replies. “Although, I still found this decision bizarre from the Wizlore government...”

The Lopunny pounces up. “Y’all know a lot of conspiracy theories could be forming outta this, right?” Her fist slams on her hand. “Hell, there could already be some right now.”

“I’m thinking of one as we speak, fam,” Justin says.

Courtney wags her tail. “Oooo!” She rushes in front of the boy, hopping in place. “And what is that, mind I ask?”

Justin lifts his brow, his back against the sofa. “Uh, I was thinking that maybe the government wanted to create multiple versions of the same Spells again, but couldn’t because they don’t have the resources to do that.” His finger lifts. “So they made Spell Guardians to protect the last remaining Spells. That way, it can give them enough time to make more Spells for themselves.”

“...” Courtney deadpans, looking away. “Sounds like crap.”

“Wha—”

“Why would they want to give Spell Guardians the last remaining Spells IF they themselves wanted to create more of them?” She lifts her hand. “They might as well keep them Spells to themselves, ya know? Makes more sense than just...*handin’* them to randos, who are most likely out of their sight.”

“Oh.” Justin scratches the back of his head, chuckling nervously. “Well shit: You made me look like a dumbass, there.”

Ada chimes in, “I got a conspiracy theory for you, Courtney: The government may have backup Spells this entire time, lying to us all about these Spells being the last remaining ones.”

Courtney’s paw presses her chin, staring down. “Damn...If you put it that way: That sounds most likely the case.”

The girl points at the rabbit. “Even moreso, considering the fact Justin, Ramon, and I aren’t even celebrated for solving the abnormal crime rates in Majestic City!”

“HA!” Courtney smirks, her hands by her hips. “The Wizlore government sure are some oddballs, alright.”

This Lopunny is an oddball, Nomar says in Ramon's head, giggling.

Ramon and Mesmeren stare at the conversation in complete blankness, eyebrows rising along with eyes blinking. Mesmeren turns to the Zorua.

"Do you...know what they're talking about?" she says, caressing her hands.

Ramon shakes his head. "Something about...conspiracy theory???" He sighs, lowering his ears. "I have no clue." His head tilts. "What even is a conspiracy theory, anyways?" He's soon met with the Lopunny close to his face.

"GLAD THAT YA ASKED, PARTNA!" Courtney shouts.

"S-Some space would be necessary..." Ramon scoots back a little.

"Ahhem: A conspiracy theory is a theory that *anyone* makes on a large organization mabob due to a particular event." Courtney smirks, winking. "Our theories earlier were about the Wizlore government, for example."

"Oh...Still don't understand it."

Courtney lifts her hand up and down. "Oh you'll get it, eventually." The Lopunny then gasps. "Wait a second: Why aren't we asking the guy who works for the Wizlore government if he knows?"

"I just said I don't know," Forest states.

"But you do work for them, right?" Sylock signs, lifting his brow.

Forest points his cane at the Blaziken. "Correct. But the agents who promoted me never told me why the last Transmutation Spell didn't get destroyed, no matter how many times I asked them. In fact, they told me that they don't know!" He strokes his beard. "Somehow, I doubt that."

Courtney snaps her fingers. "HA! Even he knows that the conspiracy theories are legit!"

"I never said I agree with them, but okay." The elder chuckles along with Courtney, Justin, and Ada.

Soon, things go quiet for a moment before Forest continues to speak. "By the way, who was that group we dealt with earlier?"

"They're Team Conjure. We told you about them before we fought them," Ada says, scratching the side of her head.

"Wait, you did?"

"...Yes."

"Huh." Forest looks off. "I suppose my memorization skill isn't there, after all." He shakes his head. "With that said...I want you to stop Team Conjure from gathering all of the eight Spells. Or else—" he pauses, looking at the sunset. "Something sinister *will* happen..."

Silence. Pure and utter silence after those words.

Everyone looks at each other, chills climbing up their spines, especially for Mesmeren's case. She tucks her head as much as she can, trembling behind her hands.

Once the two teens exchange their gazes, they look back at the elder and nod. "We'll stop them," they say.

Forest stares at them for a moment before nodding back. "Good to know." He stands up. "Unfortunately, I'll have to go call the Wizlore government and...tell them about the news. So my room will be off limits for the time being."

He turns towards a hallway leading to two bedrooms and a bathroom: The bathroom on the right side, the first bedroom on the same side, and the second on the left. "They...probably know by now, considering the importance of this village. But still, I'll call them about it. It's protocol for us Spell Guardians, after all."

"I see," Ramon says. "That...probably won't go well, I'd imagine."

Courtney sits beside Sylock again, crossing her legs. "An important item was taken away from him by some random group. What do ya think?" she states.

"U-Um, not to interrupt the conversation or anything, b-but—" Mesmeren lifts her finger as it shakes. "Where do we sleep?"

Everyone goes silent.

Justin claps his hands together. "That's a good ques—"

"You can rest here, for now. You have my permission," Forest says, walking down the hallway.

"Annnd there's our answer."

Ramon stands. "Can we sleep on the sofas here, or in Courtney and Sylock's room?" The elder points to the second bedroom, his hand resting on his room's doorknob.

“Ah swe—”

“Sorry: Y’all will have to sleep on the sofas,” Courtney says.

“And why’s that?” Ada asks, folding her arms.

Courtney simply points to Sylock. “He isn’t as relaxed with y’all as I am. Basically not used to someone being in the same room as him. Besides me, anyways.”

Sylock closes his eyes, snarling while signing at a steady pace. “*I. Have. My. Reasons.*”

Ada, Justin, Mesmeren, and Ramon stare at the Blaziken: Blank uncertainty. “Noted,” the trio says while the Drowzee looks away.

As everyone is about to get off the couch, Ramon shouts, “Wait!” They eye him. “There’s one more thing I wanted to ask Justin and Ada about. I forgot to mention it during our stay at Majestic City.”

Ada scratches the side of her head. “That is?”

“Why did that Conjure member’s move hurt me so much?”

“Um...” Ada blinks, lifting her brow. “*Which* Conjure member?”

“Oh, um: The one from three days ago when we were saving Mesmeren.”

Courtney tilts her head. “Y’all saved this Drowzee from those thugs?” Justin, Ada, Ramon, and Mesmeren nod at the Lopunny. She puts her hands behind her head. “Huh. Should’ve known them Conjure fellas kidnap some mons, too.”

“Y-Yeah...” Mesmeren shrugs, twirling her fingers around.

Ramon looks back at Ada. “Anyways, I remember you getting injured by his move too, but got up as if it barely scratched you.”

Mesmeren pokes her fingers together. “A-And then there’s me feeling a ton of pain from that water-like move earlier.”

Ramon turns towards Mesmeren, his tail pointing at her. “This too.”

“Oh. Well it’s very simple: You and her are weak against Magic moves,” Ada states.

The two Pokémon tilt their heads. “Hmm?” they say.

Ada scratches the tip of her nose. "It slipped Justin and I's minds when we were talking about Sorcerous with you. Our apologies." She remains on the sofa. "Magic type is super effective against Dark, Psychic, and Fairy types, if I recall correctly. They also take neutral damage from itself along with other types, beside the three I mentioned."

"Oh...So that's why those Magic moves hurt me more than it hurt you," Ramon concludes, staring off. "Interesting."

"Funnily enough: Magic is also weak against those same three types. Hence why that trainer's Gothitelle did a real number on me with Psychic."

"Huh." The fox's head tilts. "Any reason why that's the case?"

Ada shrugs. "None, as far as I'm concerned."

This whole Magic type thing or whatever is quite bizarre, don't you think? Nomar says, echoing throughout Ramon's mind.

Agreed...

"Wait, you've gotten beaten up before?" Courtney asks. Ada nods, Courtney tilting her head and folding her arms with intrigue. "How tough was she?"

Ada releases an exhausting sigh. "Very: She kept dodging my Mystical Projectiles, moved incredibly fast, and then got me to use my shield three times before flinging me around with Psychic."

Courtney widens her eyes. "Daaamn, what a ruthless girl she was."

"Indeed." Ada then gasps and looks at Ramon. "Oh right: Sorcerous could only use their Mystical Shield three times. After the third, they can't use it again until the battle is over."

"Why does the move function in that way?"

Ada shakes her head. "Again, I have no clue why other than the fact it's something all Sorcerous deals with."

"I...see then."

Soon, Courtney and Sylock walk towards their bedroom door as nighttime arrives. Everyone else sleeps on the couch, Mokuri waiting by his master's room for him to finish his report.

. . .

Two Zoruas rest on a large boulder, gazing at the sunset. The white flowers around shift to the side, the wind whispering along the way. Nomar lies his head against Ramon's, closing his eyes before smiling.

"It's almost as if all of this is real..." Nomar nudges the fox. "The boulder, the flowers, and the wind blowing against them as I sleep on your head." Snickers. "It's such a familiar feeling...A sense of...sweet home, in a way."

The red Zorua looks at Nomar. "I see..."

The blue Zorua opens his eyes, lowering his ears. "It's depressing that all of this...isn't real." Nomar blinks before shaking his head. "I mean, in a sense where the surroundings are made of your imaginations. But I, myself, am real and can be within your imaginations." Ramon looks at Nomar with a plain expression, tilting his head. Nomar sighs, poking Ramon's tuff. "You get what I mean, silly!"

Ramon chuckles softly. "I think so?"

Silence.

A pond in front of them swishes, gleaming from the sun. The foxes stare down at the pond, their reflection fading.

"...Hey brother—" Nomar's eyes half shut. "Do you believe what I'm doing is right?"

Ramon quirks his brow, flicking his ears. "...Yes? Why did you ask???"

Nomar remains silent for a moment, nothing but the tiny pond waves radiate the air. He then looks back at Ramon, smiling while closing his eyes. "Just wondering, that's all." Sighs. "I've noticed how concerned you've been about my decisions, and uh...it made me feel unsure about it at first." He nuzzles the Zorua. "Good to know that you believe in me."

Ramon gazes at Nomar, smiling back slowly. "Yeah..." He looks back at the pond. "I'm still curious about this Yvonne guy, though. The things he's written in the journal and...whoever the subject was that succeeded in Project Transvi—"

Nomar pats Ramon's back with his tail. "Don't worry about it. I'm certain that it has nothing to do with your past, considering humans kidnapped you and all."

"Understandable, but...I'm curious if that subject is somewhere out there. Whoever they are," Ramon says, looking up at the sky. Nomar remains silent, the wind blowing against the two with serenity.

"Perhaps we can find them once you revive me, Ramon."

"Thanks..."

More silence arises until Nomar speaks, "One more thing I want to tell you before you eventually wake up..." He turns towards the Zorua. "You were right about humans earlier. Don't feel bad about it." Ramon gives the Shiny Zorua an neverending gaze, lips sealing. He then nods, Nomar hugging him afterwards. "Everything will be fine. I promise."

Ramon looks off to the side, closing his eyes. He sighs.

...

The sun shines down at everyone outside, Justin and Ada stretching themselves out. Forest walks towards Courtney and Sylock, smiling at them as Mokuri stands by like a bodyguard. Some of the dojo students are also there, staring at the group.

"You two worked so hard in my tournament yesterday. Training to the best of your abilities, and even inspiring other students around you."

"You're absolutely cool, Tombun!" one Beedrill student says, flying around in place.

"Same here!" another student says, being the teen Courtney faced yesterday.

Courtney gazes at the students, smiling. "D'aww." She waves her paw up and down. "Thanks y'all!"

The elder sighs. "I apologize that you two didn't reach the final round because of those terrorists."

Courtney pats the elder's back. "It's fine. Granted, I was hoping to fight Sylock in the final round, but I guess that time ain't meant to be," she says while Sylock shrugs.

"I would've pummel you, for sure," he signs, smirking.

The Lopunny smirks back. "Looks like someone already believes he's won though." Her, Sylock, Forest, and the students all burst into laughter, with Sylock covering his beak. Soon, her hands rest behind her head. "While it's mighty sad that this fighting tournament crumbled down into dust, at least I'm confident about this next decision of mine."

"Oh?" The elder caresses his beard, his cane behind his back. "I think I have a hunch on what that could be. But do tell."

The rabbit slams her fist onto the palm of her hand. "I want to travel with Ramon and friends to Glory Pride City." She presses her hand against her chest, closing her eyes. "There's a

worldwide fighting tournament taking place there, and I want to participate in it.” She stares intensely at the elder. “I believe winning that there tourney would let the world know I’m the strongest Lopunny ever to live!” Her hands rest on her hips, smiling. “I can see myself inspiring all the Lopunnys in the world to become confident at reaching their goals, too. Heh.”

Forest blinks, looking at Mokuri for a moment before smiling back. “Quite the intriguing goal there, Courtney. I’m rooting for you to be the best you can possibly be. However—” he puts his hands behind his back. “Don’t be too confident in yourself. It can lead to results that won’t be in your favor, and decisions you’ll soon regret making.”

Courtney waves her hand up and down. “Oh I got this in the bag. Besides, I gained interest in that Ada girl. Her strength is definitely something during that fight against those Conjure fellas.” The Lopunny gives Ada a thumbs up while winking. “I believe trainin’ with ya will help me prove to everyone that I’m not the feminine type of Lopunny.”

Forest nods. “If you insist, then.”

The girl looks at the Lopunny. “Training, you say?” Ada cracks her fists, Mesmeren yelping. “I wouldn’t mind having another training partner with me, then. This would also explain why you haven’t left with Mrs. Phoenix and the others to Glory Pride.”

“Haha, yeah.” Courtney elbows against Forest, the elder chuckling. “Although, I was in the middle of a tournament, so that’s really why I couldn’t leave yet. Plus I wanted to look after the village. Up until now, anyways.”

“Understandable.”

Mesmeren lifts her shaky finger. “U-Um—” gulps. “S-Sorry to interrupt, but: A-Are her fingers alright!?” She points at Ada’s fingers, shivering.

“Hmm?” Ada looks at her. “Oh my fingers are fine. Knuckle cracking is normal and harmless to humans.” She wiggles her fingers, her face lacking discomfort. “See?”

Mesmeren perks up. “O-Oh...”

Sylock walks towards the elder, moving his hands. “*I’ll go with her, Sir.*” Forest eyes him. “*I... want to make sure she’s safe at all costs...*” Sylock looks away. “*I—*”

“I understand, Sylock. You don’t have to explain your reasoning any further,” the elder says, smiling.

Sylock gazes at him for a good while, eyes quaking with guilt. He forms a fist, nodding. “*Thank you, Sensei Forest.*”

Ramon quirks his brow. *That's bizarre*, he thinks. He then stretches himself out, yawning. "You two can come with us. What do you three think?" he asks the others.

Justin, Ada, and Mesmeren look at each other for a moment before nodding. "They seem like chill peeps. So yeah, fam," Justin says. "Although, Courtney's motive sounds a little specific to me."

The Lopunny lifts her brow, folding her arms. "And what might be so specific about it?"

Justin scratches the side of his head. "I mean. Well. Uh—" he claps his hands. "Carrots."

Courtney simply glares. "Are you saying that cuz I'm a *Lopunny*, boy?"

"I am climbing out of this deep hole before it gets deeper, fam."

Everyone starts laughing, Mesmeren blinking for a moment before giggling along.

Forest then nods, smiling once more. "That settles it then. I'm happy for the decision you and Sylock made. I wish the two of you good luck on your journeys!"

"Wait!" Courtney shouts. Ramon and the others stop in their tracks, Courtney giving a look of concern to Forest. "Will the dojo get renovated? Will everything here be alright?" She shifts her scabbard. "Will...y'all be fine without me and Sylock?"

Forest nods. "Mokuri and I got things under control now. Plus, I'll let the Wizlore government know if anything drastic happens here again."

Courtney stares at Forest for a moment, holding her hands together and pushing them against her chest. She nods, smiling. "Alright then."

Everyone waves at Forest, Mokuri, and the other dojo students, walking towards a nearby forest.

"Take care, everyone!" Ada shouts. Everyone at the village says their goodbyes as well, Forest keeping his smiles up.

The group walks past a sign:

'Now Entering Gloomy Woods'